INSTRUCTIONS AND REGULATIONS for the FAST of LENT, 1798; Addreſſed to the Faithful of the LONDON DISTRICT.

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Now therefore, ſaith the Lord, be converted to me with all your heart, in faſting, and in weeping and in mourning. Joel ii. 12.

THE ſcenes of calamity with which Religion and Society are afflicted; the means by which ſo wide a ſpread has been given to theſe ſcenes; and the unprecedented ſucceſſes of the enemy, raging againſt Governments, and againſt the Church, induce us to look upon theſe ſcenes of accumulated diſtreſs, as judgments of Heaven on the irreligion, and immorality of our age.

Since we know that God inflicted in his anger chaſtiſements of this nature on his choſen people, the children of Iſrael, when they forgot his ordinances and violated his law; Since we know that God has oftentimes viſited the ſins of chriſtian kingdoms, with the devaſtations of hoſtile armies; we may with reaſon ſuppoſe the tribulations, under which Religion is now mourning, to be the effuſion of the vial of his wrath upon our grievous and multiplied tranſgreſſions.

Hitherto theſe diſaſters have fallen on foreign countries only: but may it not be ſaid that the trumpet has been ſounded on our own coaſts: and that the vial may be poured alſo on our heads? For the implacable foe, to which it has been given to carry the ſcourge through ſo many ſtates on the Continent, breathes vengeance againſt theſe our iſlands.

Let us therefore humble ourſelves under the ſenſe of our iniquities: and knowing that it is to God we muſt recur for pardon and for protection, Let us be converted unto him with all our heart, in faſting, and in weeping and in mourning. Who knoweth but he will turn from his fierce anger? He had denounced deſtruction againſt the city of Ninive, yet ſhewed himſelf appeaſed by the faſting and humiliation of the inhabitants of that city.---The men of Ninive believed in God; and truſting that, if they did penance for their crimes, he would recall the ſentence which had been denounced, they turned every one from his evil way, and from the iniquity that was in his hands. They proclaimed a Faſt. They cried to the Lord with all their ſtrength. And their faſting and prayers prevailed. *God ſaw their works, that they were turned from their evil way: and God had mercy with regard to the evil, which he had ſaid that he would do to them, and he did it not.* Jonas iii. 10.

Animated with the like hope, viz. that God will accept the puniſhments which we inflict on ourſelves; and will hearken in his mercy to the ſupplications of his humbled and penitent children; We exhort you to attend faithfully to all the duties of Lent: and to offer up your penitential auſterities and moſt fervent prayers through the merits of Jeſus Chriſt, particularly on the Wedneſday of the ſecond Week, for averting the heavy judgments of God, and for obtaining his divine bleſſing on his Majeſty's arms by ſea and land.

With this view we appoint that all the Clergy of the London Diſtrict, who have the care of Congregations, or, who may officiate to ſuch, ſhall on Wedneſday the ſeventh of March offer up the Maſs marked in the Miſſal *Tempore Belli*, ſaying or cauſing to be ſaid or ſung before the ſame, the Pſalm *Miſerere mei Deus*, with the prayer, *Deus qui culpâ offenderis pœnitentiâ placaris:* and after the ſame, the Pſalm *Exaudiat te Dominus* with the accuſtomed prayer for the King: and we earneſtly exhort all the faithful devoutly to aſſiſt at the aforeſaid public office.

The Diſcipline of the Church in this kingdom requires that we refrain from the uſe of Fleſh Meat, of Eggs and of Cheeſe through the whole of Lent: but the circumſtances of the times plead for a relaxation of this diſcipline; and we are not unwilling to admit the propriety of ſome diſpenſations in the point of Abſtinence. We accordingly grant the following

ALLOWANCES FOR LENT:

1. Fleſh Meat is allowed on all Sundays, Tueſdays, and Thurſdays for five Weeks, beginning with the Firſt Sunday, and ending with the Thurſday before Palm-Sunday. On the Tueſdays and Thurſdays this allowance is only for once in the day.

2. Eggs are allowed on all days excepting Aſh-Wedneſday and the four laſt days of Holy Week.

3. Cheeſe is allowed every day, excepting Aſh-Wedneſday and Good-Friday.

LONDON, FEB. 5, 1798. ✠ JOHN CENTURIEN, V. A. L.